

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: BEXP, BU

SUBJECT: PLOVDIV FAIR: THE NECESSITY FOR CHOICE

REF: (A) STATE 7942; (B) SOFIA 42; (C) SOFIA 2768;

(D) SOFIA A-94 OF 10/1/75; (E) SOFIA 2705;

(F) SOFIA 2756; (G) USDOC 549

1. WE FIND REF A A DEEPLY DISTURBING MESSAGE, PARTICULARLY IF READ TOGETHER WITH REF G. IT APPEARS TO US TO SIGNAL A LESS THAN OPTIMUM, PERHAPS EVEN A LESS THAN ADEQUATE ATTITUDE OF THOSE WHO MUST MAKE THE MAIN EFFORT TO RECRUIT FOR AND MOUNT A SUCCESSFUL EXHIBIT AT THIS YEAR'S PLOVDIV FAIR.

2. THE ISSUES AS WE SEE THEM ARE THESE: (A) THE MOST EFFECTIVE USE OF SPACE WITHIN THE DOME TO MOUNT A SHOW WHICH YIELDS THE GREATEST SALES RETURN; (B) EFFECTIVE RECRUITING TECHNIQUES WHICH WILL BRING INTO THE EXHIBITION COMPANIES WHICH CAN MAKE MAXIMUM USE OF THE FAIR'S PROVEN SALES POTENTIAL.

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3. THE PAVILION 24 PROBLEM. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE

THAT IT WILL BE MOST DIFFICULT TO HAVE A FIRST CLASS EXHIBIT IF OFFICE, LOUNGE AND STORAGE SPACE IS TO BE INCLUDED IN DOME. DURING PEAK PERIODS LAST YEAR, VISITORS WERE CLOCKED AT 5,000 PER HOUR. WALKWAYS THUS CANNOT BE MUCH REDUCED, LEAVING ONLY CONTRACTABLE AREA THE EXHIBITS THEMSELVES. IN ADDITION, ABSENCE OF TOILET FACILITIES WILL BE SORELY FELT BY EXHIBITORS AND EXHIBITION STAFF: NEAREST PUBLIC TOILETS ARE SEVERAL HUNDRED FEET AWAY, ARE EXTREMELY CROWDED (INVOLVING LONG WAITS IN LINE), AND QUITE FILTHY. WE CAN EASILY IMAGINE THE COMPLAINTS FROM EXHIBITORS WHICH ABSENCE OF TOILET AND WASH-UP FACILITIES WOULD PROVOKE, AND THEY WOULD BE RIGHT. ONCE AGAIN WE POINT OUT THAT FAILURE TO TAKE PAVILION 24 MAY WELL LEAD TO REQUIREMENT THAT WE MOVE DOME, LAY NEW CONCRETE PAD AND RETURN SITE TO ITS FORMER CONDITION, WHICH WOULD BE MOST EXPENSIVE UNDERTAKINGS.

4. RECRUITMENT PROBLEMS. WE ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE FAIR IS NOT ORGANIZED AND MANAGED ALONG LINES THAT HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL WOULD ENDORSE. WE AGREE THAT EFFORTS SHOULD BE MADE TO STRAIGHTEN OUT THE HOTEL SITUATION, AND WILL MAKE THOSE EFFORTS. NEVERTHELESS, WE BELIEVE THE COMPLAINTS, SELECTIVELY CULLED FROM A SMALL MINORITY OF PARTICIPANTS' REPORTS, CITED IN REF A ARE RATHER OVERDRAWN. WE NOTE THAT MR. EAST OF SIMPLIMATIC, FROM WHOSE REPORT COME POINTS D, E AND F OF PARA 2 IN REF A, CONCLUDED BY ACKNOWLEDGING THE COMPLAINTS WERE IN FACT RATHER MINOR. EAST, BY THE WAY, WAS NOT BUMPED FROM HIS HOTEL ROOM AS ALLEGED: HE ARRIVED ONE DAY AHEAD OF SCHEDULE AND WAS GIVEN EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION; THE FOLLOWING DAY HE WAS MOVED TO HIS REGULARLY ASSIGNED ROOM. THE ONLY OTHER HOTEL COMPLAINTS CAME FROM THE REPRESENTATIVES OF CONTINENTAL CAN AND TECHNICON WHO, HAVING ARRIVED WITH GIRLFRIENDS, WERE DISTRESSED THAT THEY WERE ASSIGNED SINGLE ROOMS AS THEIR COMPANIES REQUESTED RATHER THAN DOUBLES. IN CONTRAST, THE MCKEE REPRESENTATIVE DESCRIBED THE ACCOMMODATIONS AS ADEQUATE. CLEARLY THEY ARE NOT MORE THAN THAT, AND SOME INCONVENIENCES ARE PERHAPS INEVITABLE. BUT WE BELIEVE THE PROVEN HIGH SALES POTENTIAL SHOULD MAKE IT WORTHWHILE.

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TO ROUND OUT THE POINTS IN PARA 2, REF A, WE SHOULD NOTE THAT AMERICANS WERE NOT CHARGED TWICE THAT OF OTHER NATIONALITIES: THE TARIFFS DO INCREASE CONSIDERABLY AT PLOVIDIV DURING FAIR TIME, BUT THIS IS APPLIED TO ALL NATIONALITIES. (WE UNDERSTAND THE SAME THING OCCURS AT OTHER MAJOR TRADE FAIRS ELSEWHERE.) ONLY THE SOVIETS HAVE BEEN GIVEN PERMISSION TO BRING BUSES ON THE GROUNDS--THIS IS INVIDIOUS BUT THE SOVIET

PAVILION DOES INDEED HAVE A HUGE NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES. AND THE ONLY INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE PASSES TO USE THE BACK GATE ARE BULGARIAN FAIR AUTHORITY EMPLOYEES. THE BACK GATE LEADS TO DIRT ROADS AND OPEN FIELDS AND IS AN ENTRANCE ONLY FOR HEAVY CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT.

5. MANY OF QUESTIONS RAISED MIGHT BEST BE CLEARED UP IF BEWT WOULD NOMINATE A RECRUITER WHO (DESPITE REF G) WOULD VISIT PLOVDIV AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE TO SEE THE SITE AND DISCUSS PROBLEMS. EXCEPT FOR DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY DOWNEY, NO ONE IN BEWT HAS EVER SEEN PLOVDIV OR TOURED THE FAIRGROUNDS. SURELY AN EFFECTIVE RECRUITING EFFORT WOULD REQUIRE THAT THE RECRUITER BE ABLE TO SPEAK IN DETAIL TO COMPANY REPS ABOUT ACTUAL, NOT MYTHICAL, CONDITIONS.

6. BEYOND THIS, WE WONDER WHY THE FEW UNFAVORABLE COMMENTS RECORDED LAST YEAR--AND NEITHER THE MANY FAVORABLE ONES NOR THE VOLUME OF BUSINESS--SHOULD SO ADVERSELY AFFECT THE RECRUITMENT OF EXHIBITORS IN THE CHEMICAL AND CONSTRUCTION SECTORS OF US INDUSTRY. AND WE ARE CONCERNED THAT A NEGATIVE ATTITUDE ON THE PART OF SOME OFFICERS IN BEWT, HOWEVER UNCONSCIOUSLY HELD, MIGHT WELL COMMUNICATE ITSELF TO POTENTIAL EXHIBITORS.

7. WE TRUST THAT ALL CONCERNED DO INDEED WANT AN EXHIBITION AT PLOVDIV THIS BICENTENNIAL YEAR OF WHICH WE CAN BE PROUD, AND WHICH WILL TAP THE BUSINESS POTENTIAL THAT SO CLEARLY EXISTS. FOR OUR PART, WE ARE PREPARED TO TAKE THE HOTEL PROBLEM TO HIGH LDPDEX AT THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE AND THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE. INDEED, THE AMBASSADOR WILL BROACH THE SUBJECT WITH VICE MINISTER OF FOREIGN TRADE LUKANOV
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AT A LUNCHEON JANUARY 20. WE URGE THAT FOR ITS PART, BEWT IMPLEMENT ITS PORTIONS OF THE CHECKLIST CONTAINED IN REF C AND RESPOND TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE IN REF D.
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